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Media Release
March 9, 2011

In Croatia, AG Biden Talks Fighting Corruption
At State Dept/Marshall Center conference, Biden says 'we can never let up'

ZAGREB, Croatia – Citing examples from across the United States, Delaware Attorney General Beau Biden emphasized that law-enforcement authorities must constantly be vigilant and work together to combat corruption during remarks today to an international criminal justice conference.

The three-day conference – “Counter Corruption Best Practices - Increased Effectiveness through Interagency and Multi-Sectoral Approaches” – brought together law-enforcement officers from throughout Europe and was sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, who invited Biden to participate through the National Association of Attorneys General. The organizations asked him to share his perspectives as a former federal prosecutor, including time in nearby Kosovo in 2001 advising authorities as they established the young country's legal system, as Delaware's Attorney General and as a Captain in the Delaware Army National Guard's judge advocate general's corps.

“We all have a reason for doing what we do, and for me and many others, it is fighting the abuse of power. Corruption, in any form is the abuse of power,” Biden said. “You cannot stop corruption with one agency working by itself. You need a sustained effort and a dedicated staff using criminal and civil tools that have proven to be successful. We can never let up, especially against corruption. Fighting crime is a lot like cutting the grass - you have to keep doing it over and over again, you cannot walk away from the challenge.”

Biden cited the January arrest of 120 men alleged to have been parts of organized crime families, which authorities said is the largest single-day round up of suspected mafia members in U.S. history. That investigation involved work of multiple government agencies, ranging from several U.S. Attorneys' offices to state and local police to the U.S. Army to the Italian police. Biden also told the representatives from European countries that the U.S. has had success fighting corruption by effectively using wiretaps, the RICO statutes and shared resources.

Biden participated on a panel focusing on criminal justice tools used to combat corruption. Also serving on the panel were Lutfi Minxhoxi (head of asset recovery for the Albanian State Police), Drago Kos (President of the Council of Europe's Group of States Against Corruption) and Pavol Zilincik (political and legal specialist with the U.S. embassy in Bratislava, Slovakia). The National Association of Attorneys General paid for the trip.

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